PEACE CORPS

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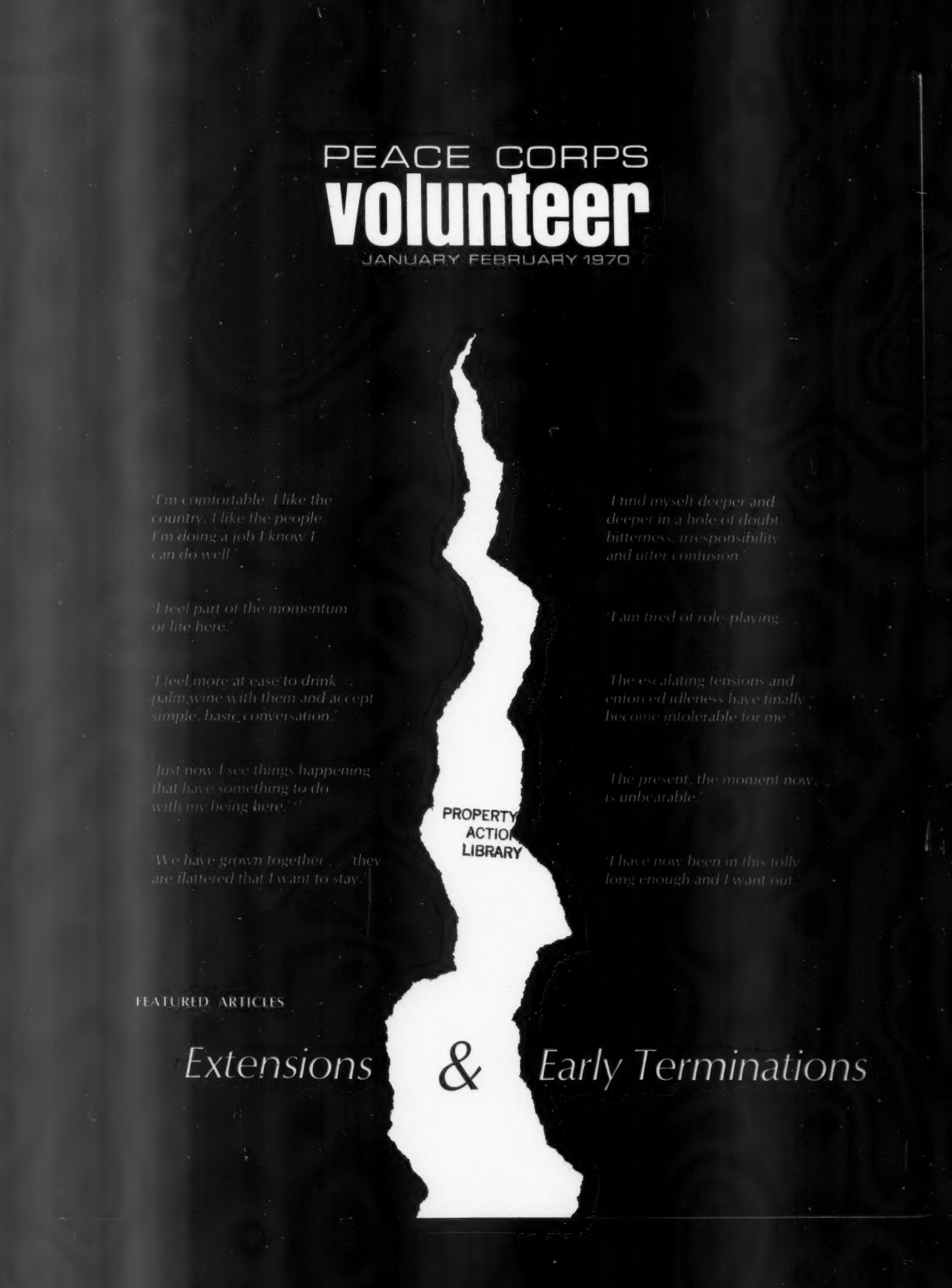
'I'm comfortable. I like the country. I like the people. I'm doing a job I know I can do well.'
'I feel part of the momentum of life here.'
'I feel more at ease to drink palm wine with them and accept simple, basic conversation.'
'Just now I see things happening that have something to do with my being here.'
'We have grown together . . . they are flattered that I want to stay.'
'I find myself deeper and deeper in a hole of doubt, bitterness, irresponsibility and utter confusion.'
'I am tired of role-playing.'
'The escalating tensions and enforced idleness have finally become intolerable for me.'
'The present, the moment now, is unbearable.'
'I have now been in this folly long enough and I want out.'
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FEATURED ARTICLES

Extensions & Early Terminations

TERMINEES AND EXTENDEES ANSWER—

'Why I'm leaving' 'Why I'm st

Start from the assumption that the two-year tour as a Volunteer is normal. Beyond that, what influences a person to commit himself to serve a third year or longer? Is there a different motivation or goal that encourages him to do this? Has he redefined the rather general outlook he had when he joined the Peace Corps?

Just as an extension is a departure from the normal two-year service, so is the early termination. What motivations and attitudes change from the time he joins up which encourage a Volunteer to leave early? What was missing in the life he expected to live there . . . or what *was* there that he met unexpectedly?

Many who extend focus on job-related motivations. But there is a tendency to "rationalize the decision to quit in generalized philosophical terms," as Charles Creesy has pointed out in the country magazine, *El Ecuador*.

Official explanations get snarled in definitions on the subject of Peace Corps attrition. Some people prefer to start counting with those individuals who apply but don't accept invitations to training. Others count people who accept but don't show up. Some count the ones that drop out during training. Even Volunteers who sign up for an extension but quit during that period are counted as early terminations, disregarding the fact they finished two years.

There are attrition figures based on two-year periods (the time any one group would be overseas) and there are projections into the future—which show the problem getting worse, not better.

Volunteers Al Olsen, left, and Mike Athan both extended in Micronesia for a third year. Al had helped establish the first school in the village of Ngetpang, Palau District. Mike spent two years in public health work, taking the first complete census and disease survey, and later taught English. Both were asked to work in the in-country training program for new groups.

Adding to the complexity of defining attrition is the judgment about reasons for quitting. Is the Volunteer who leaves early to come home and work in a training program or to register on time for graduate school to be placed in the same category as the one who has "personal adjustment problems"? And what about those who leave for medical reasons or because they are drafted or because there is "no viable job" for them to do as Volunteers?

Without fail, it seems, each set of figures is challenged by a different camp of "attrition rate experts".

THE VOLUNTEER has chosen for its statistical population those who actually were Volunteers anytime between 1961 and June 30, 1969. Regionally this is how it has worked out thus

- 1,550 of the 10,942 Volunteers having served in Africa have terminated early; 1,151 have extended their original "contract" or reenrolled to do it all over again.
- 1,096 of the 7,409 in East Asia and Pacific have terminated early; 1,085 have extended or reenrolled.
- 1,322 of the 7,560 in North Africa, Near East and South Asia have terminated early and 528 have extended or reenrolled.
- 2,801 of the 13,478 in Latin America have terminated early and 1,362 have extended or reenrolled.

Before spring, the Division of Research will finish its descriptive study of the characteristics of Volunteers who do not complete service, as compared with those who do, and how these characteristics have changed over the years. THE VOLUNTEER's presentation here is not an official study. It is an opportunity to see in a personal way what Volunteers have written about leaving or about staying.

Why did Gene Flinn keep working in Panama so far beyond the time he could have left? How did art and karate help Meg Wheatley understa "things Korean" that attracted her

m staying'

extend? Why did Carter Bryant stay in Iran, Tom Graviss in Ghana, and Harvey Tilden in Thailand?

With nearly 15 percent of Volunteers there extending or reenrolling, it's logical to look to the EAP region for observations on this additional service. The regional deputy director is Loren Cox, former Volunteer in Nigeria and deputy country director in Korea.

"We find that a majority of Volunteers can be highly effective in their third year," he says. "They know the language, can cope with the culture, know how things get done in the host country context. Additionally, they are of enormous assistance to new Volunteers, especially in technical support. And we always ask for letters from host supervisors in extension cases, so we know these Volunteers are wanted.

"I also attribute our high extension rate to the fact that it is typical of EAP Volunteers to live with host families, and this gets them more involved with their country.

"For the most part, however, I think extendees in EAP have concluded that they have good jobs. And the culture, in a passive way, might be influential. In other words, it is worth staying to work longer because the society is not abrasive, not harsh on foreigners.

"From past experience," Cox concludes, "we can say that it's often the third-year Volunteers who have provided the core or the seed idea for a new project or a new focus on an old project. When I visit a country, I specifically look for or ask about the extendees because it is highly probable that these people are onto a concept that works."

Malaysia correspondent, Sharon Oudemool, an extendee herself, describes the motivation a bit differently.

"I hardly qualify as a real extendee since I'm here only because my husband, whom I met here, had completed only one of his two years," she says. "If any attitude changes have accompanied my extension, however, they are further negative thoughts about what Peace Corps is and is not doing in Malaysia.

"Volunteers generally extend here because we have such a good life, not because of job or Peace Corps-related ideas. The climate is delightful year-round, the food plentiful and delicious, the people usually gracious and friendly, the standard of living one of the highest in Asia. English is widespread, and the chances for travel to diverse countries and cultures are excellent because of Malaysia's geographical position.

"Volunteers leave early, including 20 per cent of my group," she notes, "because of poor, inconsistent, incomplete planning by Peace Corps and the local government. Many jobs, mine included, and most counterparts are fictional and our pleas for better placement and follow-through have not gotten results."

Jeremy James writes in the India Volunteer newspaper, *Dravidian,* that "extendees feel there is a renewed commitment and new feeling of personal direction that accompanies the process of extending. They are workers more than culture trippers. And often the increased pleasure that extendees experience during their third year comes from working on a job that the Volunteer has chosen and planned himself."

After coming back to the U.S. on special leave between his second and third years, Mike Athan was even happier he had extended as a public health Volunteer in Palau, Micronesia.

"Los Angeles smog was overwhelming, as was the noise and overall filth," he recalled. "I found a largely widened generation gap. My friends were burying their parents and vice versa. I also had a sudden awareness of the social difference between races. In Palau I had become color blind, but in the States. . . ."

Many extendees distill their rationale to a few pragmatic phrases, like: "I want to stay until the class I started to teach in 10th grade graduates from 12th grade." "I want to stay through the next coconut harvest." "Until the irrigation ditches are finished." "Until the dam is built." Or, of all things, "for the next forest fire season."

It is for those Volunteers who take more than 25 words to answer "why leave" or "why stay" that THE VOLUNTEER provides special coverage this month.

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Judy Thelen, editor; Steve Prindle, associate editor; Juanita Daniels, editorial assistant. Design by Paul Reed.

Correspondents: **AFGHANISTAN:** Don C. Yager. **BOLIVIA:** William Buzenberg. **BRAZIL:** Mike McCullough. **CHILE:** Charles Smith, Jr. **COLOMBIA:** Scott James. **COSTA RICA:** Roger Hamilton. **EASTERN CARIBBEAN:** Bill Barrett. **ECUADOR:** Charles Creesy. **FIJI:** Jeff Thigpen. **GHANA:** Lawrence Grobel. **GUINEA:** Charles T. Creecy. **GUYANA:** Paul Richard. **HONDURAS:** Paul Lux. **IRAN:** David Hoovler. **KENYA:** Berne Ellenson. **KOREA:** Aaron Gurwitz. **MALAWI:** T. D. McCloskey, Jr., John Shannon. **MALAYSIA:** Sharon Clarke Oudemool. **MICRONESIA:** Chuck Freedman. **MOROCCO:** Kenneth Agata, Roberta Prees. **NEPAL:** Jonathan Fox. **NICARAGUA:** Eugene Patterson. **NIGERIA:** Bob Larson. **PANAMA:** Robert J. Vila. **PARAGUAY:** Suzanne Tingley. **PERU:** Lucy Conger, Karl Lorenz. **SENEGAL:** Irwin Arieff. **SWAZILAND:** Mike Ascolese. **THAILAND:** Mike Schmuecker. **TONGA:** Joella Bisson. **URUGUAY:** William Purdy. **VENEZUELA:** Edward Thiele.

WHY I'M LEAVING

'The present is unbearable'

Dhanick Dal Yadav was one of my fourth graders in Siraha. After class was over one day, he came running up to me as I was crossing the school yard and wanted to know where I was going. "I'm walking to America," I replied. "Then I'll go with you," he said as he grabbed my hand.

We walked off across the school yard together. I felt like a king. And now I truly am going to America. But alone.

I shall write about my Nepal.

Every Friday night the hostel students have a prayer feast to the goddess of learning. What a fantastic scene! The students sit down in two long lines facing each other, their lanterns on the ground in front of them. One boy plays the harmonium, another plays the cymbols, and a third bangs on a drum. Most of the songs are repeat songs—that is, one or two boys will sing a verse and then the others will repeat.

During the week that I got very feverish, the only time I left the house was on Friday night to see the prayer feast.

In March, I made a three-day trip with another teacher down to Darbhanga, India. One night we saw two Hindi films. In the first, a comedy, I counted 19 separate crying scenes.

Also in Darbhanga, I saw a begger sitting naked on the sidewalk. Covered with grime. The grime blackened by flies. His nose and lips were completely immersed in flies. And he was eating the flies that would crawl onto his lips.

In my village I was awakened almost every morning by a woman who came to get water at the well next to my house. I think she had TB. Every morning she'd stand by the well and wake me up with her sickness. She would spend long, incredibly long, periods of time coughing, hacking and spitting, trying to force the sickness from her lungs. I began putting my radio on the ledge at the head of my bed. And in the morning I would turn it on loud, really loud. God, lady, I'm sorry. But I don't want to hear your coughing.

Siraha High School is overcrowded; some students have to be turned away.

About the second week I was there, a laborer walked over with his son from a village about 10 miles away. The boy was carrying a few pieces of clothing wrapped in a blanket—that's all. The father asked if his son could be accepted into the school. The headmaster didn't even interrupt his bridge game, looked up for a few seconds, and said "No." That's all.

The father looked silently for a few seconds at the card players. Then they both left.

My heart was pounding at my eardrums. I asked why. Said the headmaster: "I could tell just by looking at the boy that he did not have a good character and would have been a troublemaker."

The very same afternoon the president of the district drove up in a jeep. His son—trunk, suitcases and all—was accepted with open arms.

As I was walking through the center of town, a man began yelling insults at me from a store front. I didn't even know him. I don't think I'd even seen him before. I stood silently for a few seconds. Then I walked off dragging my soul.

At the beginning of summer vacation I took the train from Sita Mari to Raxaul. In the Sita Mari station I met a farmer whose home was just east of Raxaul. We left Sita Mari at 11 p.m., and by the time we reached Raxaul three hours later I had be-

Bill Dionne left Nepal early but remembers the day he fought local spirits and won.

co[illegible] as totally depressed as I have ev[illegible] been.

My friend's name was Ram Prasad. He was my age and had a young son of whom he was fantastically proud. Ram Prasad had not received more than a few years of schooling. But his knowledge was impressive and his English better than most Nepalis or Indians with BA degrees in English.

"It is very difficult," he said, "for a man to keep the respect of his family if he is poor. I have set myself the goal of saving 20 rupees a month. But if we should get a daughter, I don't know how I'd be able to marry her into a good family. I don't have enough land to sell. It is difficult for a poor man to keep the respect of his family."

Man, as you talk, I think of my $50 watch. It would take you two years to be able to afford it. It took me three days. But at least you can't see my watch, for I've gotten the habit of putting it in my pocket and not on my wrist. I'm tired of being the richest man in town. I have a watch, two pens, sunglasses—and that makes me fantastically wealthy.

[illegible]hen Ram Prasad began to tell m[illegible]bout his big dream: "I am not very religious. This is the only life I have, and this is the only world I'll ever be able to know. Before I die, I would like to visit all the countries of this world and know about the people. I have read much about other places and sometimes I go to the cinema in Raxaul. And now I want very much to see these places."

God, man. Stop reading. Stop going to the movies. You're poor. You'll not get anywhere. You're just going to get deeper in despair.

But I'm not bitter. I remember too well the flowers that some students drew on the steps of my house . . . the day a student bought me two cookies in the bazaar . . . the day I fought all the local spirits and won . . . an elephant ride under a full moon. And it is apparent that my students did learn some English while I was teaching them. And I was happy in Siraha.

So why am I leaving? Yesterday had been quite pleasant. Tomorrow was good to look forward to. But the present, the moment now, became un[illegible]ble.

—Bill Dionne

WHY I'M STAYING

Carter Bryant, a teacher, stayed in Iran, and his friends in Torbat Jam were flattered.

'We have grown together'

"The first thing a teacher assigned to Torbat does is try and get out. So the people reasoned that if I spent a third year, I must like it and be interested in them. They were flattered that I wanted to stay."

Carter Bryant, an English teacher, was the first Volunteer assigned to Torbat Jam, a town in eastern Iran near the Afghanistan border.

Partly because of a poor training program, Carter said, "the first year I spent much of my time wondering what to do next. In the second year I was more comfortable teaching. But why a third year? I was really enjoying my class and talking with students. And my evening English discussion groups were growing in number and interest."

In these groups, which absorbed many of his out-of-school hours, Carter discussed any subject which interested his students. "When they begin to think and learn in a foreign language on a subject of personal interest, the language becomes alive and useable for the Iranian students," Carter explained.

His own knowledge of their language, Farsi, had increased. Combined with his interest in Persian poetry, he could talk with great fervor about one of Iran's most sacred educational treasures—its literature.

After seeing youngsters entertain at weddings, Carter took several groups of them and organized a dance troupe. By searching through old documents that families had stored away and talking with village elders, he and the boys learned as much as possible about the history of the Torbat Jam area. Finally, a history was compiled and the dancers could present it with both Farsi and English narrative. Eventually, the troupe performed in the capital city, Tehran. The whole effort built pride in the community of Torbat and self-confidence for the youngsters.

Of his total experience there, Carter said "We have grown together and I am most satisfied with the results."

—Carter Bryant was interviewed by VOLUNTEER *correspondent Mike Sarka*

WHY I'M STAYING

WHY I'M LEAVING

Meg Wheatley stayed in Korea because her life was full of moments of learning and sharing which seemed worthwhile.

'Now I see things happening'

The greatest contributions that I can make lie ahead. In the last half year I've become aware of so many new ways to enter into Korean life—ways that previously were either closed to me or to which I was just oblivious. To leave now, when I feel a part of the rhythm and momentum of life here, would be to cut myself off from many valuable learning and giving experiences. Some of these new activities outside of school include directing plays, studying Chinese calligraphy and practicing karate.

When I took up karate—in an environment noticeably different from my school, where I taught English—I was forced to rely on my Korean, and the improvement in my language ability dates from that time. And the people I've met through the study of calligraphy and art have given me the first dim rays of understanding, not only into art, but also into the ancient qualities of patience, discipline, and nobility of the scholar. All that perhaps sounds a bit much to claim, but there's something almost mystical in studying an art form that is so old and so established in its techniques; in studying it, you can't help but feel captured and drawn into the tradition that created it.

With another Volunteer I helped direct an English language play. It concerned a "crisis" in the life of an American high school newspaper, and after two months of daily rehearsals emerged nine Korean students who talked and moved like American students. As a means of improving a student's English and generating enthusiasm for learning English, a play has no equal. The response to this first effort was so good that I'd like to try another play this autumn.

My suggestions at the school where I teach become more pertinent as I become more aware of the inner workings and pressures of the school system. I know it's immodest to say so, but I think it would be a waste of my experience to leave now, just when I can see things happening in my school that have something to do with my being here.

Put at its simplest, I want to extend because I'm happy here; and I'm happy because my life is full of moments of learning and sharing which to me seem vital and worthwhile.

—Meg Wheatley

'Tension, idleness intolerable for me'

This early termination is a decision which I could not have conceived of making before the student disorders began some two months ago, but I firmly believe that it is the only sane course open to me now.

The escalating tensions and frustrations of living in a totalitarian

e, combined with those of enforced idleness, have finally become intolerable for me. Even the constant, taunting cries of "foreigner" and the stones thrown by small children, which in better days I could easily rationalize or ignore, have begun to take effect.

Equally important in my decision, however, is my attitude toward my job. In the first semester I didn't worry much about the relevance of what I was doing. I could easily brush aside my doubts and gain satisfaction from attentive faces and good test scores. But the strike and closure and the sight of my students being beaten with rifle butts and reports of some being killed have forced me to think long and hard about the significance of my work here. The conclusions I reached have not been comforting. I decided that the students were accomplishing a great deal more by staying out of school to protest conditions in this country than they could possibly accomplish by listening to my lectures on ancient history. Thus, my level of job satisfaction, once very high, plummeted to zero.

Eric Hoffer says that for the backward peoples of the world self-esteem is more important than material advancement. In light of my experience here, I believe this to be true. In working for their material advancement, we compromise their self-esteem. In the act of helping them, we force them to recognize their underdevelopment—and this is painful. It is only human for them to resent us; for regardless of our motivations, we are walking, talking, living proof of the backwardness here.

Are we really improving the quality of their lives when we rob them of their silly illusions and introduce them to reality? Should we tear off their rose-colored glasses so that they can see the awful truth? Should the Peace Corps be here? I'd say no. But perhaps we've already done our damage and cannot turn back. We've helped bring a small number of young people into the 20th century, and now they are thoroughly miserable, hating their own government, hating themselves, hating America, and striving desperately for new illusions to replace those which they can no longer cling to, since reality here cannot be faced.

I suppose I'm like a lover whose dream girl has fallen off her pedestal. I feel that the Peace Corps idea is so good that it really should help both the people of host countries and the United States. But I have agonizing doubts that, like all the proverbial best laid plans, it has gone astray in a world of very harsh realities.

—Name withheld by the editors

'Deeper and deeper in a hole of doubt'

Richard Farinato left Ecuador in part because trying to identify with others' problems and lives when one is not sure of his own is destructive.

I am trying in this letter to outline my reasons for wanting to resign from the Peace Corps. I have been in country for six months now . . . unfortunately, I have become a part of the Peace Corps process. It catches up the individual placed in it and takes all human compassion, turning him into another competing figure in a column of numbers.

I have become this. When roused to defend myself or my being here, it is for and with the God-almighty program that I fight, something which I cannot fully accept, but something to which I have been committed. I did not want this responsibility, this burden of someone before me who thought his way of saving Ecuador was best.

Why do I not seek to change sites or jobs and stick out my two-year contract? I am not sure that it is this job that I am fighting, for the job is nothing more than an outgrowth of the philosophy and goals of the supervisory organization. Peace Corps is not something I am proud to be a member of; now I wish to divorce it completely.

Since I entered training, since I got in country, these gut feelings have been coming to me that I am not Peace Corps material, given the Peace Corps I am now involved with. I ignored these feelings, thinking that my newness, my chaotic state would recede and leave me standing squarely on top of my situation. This has not happened. I find myself deeper and deeper in a hole of doubt, bitterness, irresponsibility and utter confusion.

I realize that I am to blame for as great a part of it as Peace Corps. To remain in the cloister, to stay in Ecuador for two years would be asking myself to stagnate, to compromise myself and, more importantly, the Ecuadorians with whom I have dealings into accepting a way of living that I do not want and they do not need. I fear a loss of myself; I fear a dragging brain washing to a lifestyle not of my own choosing. I have no doubts about the dangers inherent in insincerity between the Volunteer and the people of his host country.

Regarding my own identity, I have come to see that finding one's own identity in a familiar situation is a difficult enough task; it is the task I was involved in at home before I came to South America. But to try to identify with others' problems and lives when one's own are not clear, to try to find and give answers when one has no idea of his own is like building a pyramid of minds upside-down. It is bound to topple on the bottom man, crushing him and injuring those above him.

I have now been in this folly long enough and I want out.

—Richard H. Farinato
From El Ecuador,
Volunteer magazine in Ecuador

WHY I'M STAYING

'Doing a job I can do well'

In Thailand Harvey Tilden found that the third year is the one which justifies the first two.

"At the end of three months I knew I wanted to extend if I could."

Harvey Tilden, 24. Tall, blond-haired. "Farang." The perfect Thai stereotype of an American, right off a Bangkok movie marquee. He was just finishing his third year in Thailand.

"It was just comfortable. I like the country; I like the people. I was doing a job I knew I could do well."

In a land of 5'5" people, 6' blond-haired Americans have to go out of their way to dispel any impression of arrogance. Looking down on the top of people's heads can be disastrous for a Peace Corps Volunteer. But you can't help it. It's like being a Green Bay Packer in the Lombardi era: you don't have to tell people you're superior; when you're 6'6" and wear a gold helmet, people assume it.

Harvey uses a simple maneuver to destroy this unwanted impression. When he talks with a Thai, he uses a smile like a comma to punctuate his opinions and take the gospel edge off his advice. Like the ability to laugh at yourself, his smile effectively removes any hint of superiority.

"There are many types of arrogance. There is the blatant 'foreign expert' arrogance. It's out in the open. But we Volunteers can have a condescending arrogance that is hard to recognize. We move in and identify with the people, but deep down inside we're the 'saviors.' We can have a missionary complex and not even recognize it."

You get the impression that if no one asked him his opinion, he wouldn't mind at all. But since you asked, he opens up and speaks with humor, honesty and a certain intensity about his reasons for staying in Thailand a third year in the TEFL program. He speaks for himself only —no claim to a typical Thai Peace Corps experience. He talks about *his* experience.

"Our training program was a mess. No integration. Cross-cultural studies were almost non-existent. We had no real picture of what it would be like before we got here. Several Volunteers terminated the first week we arrived."

The first year he spent in a teacher training college in the jungles of southern Thailand. It was there that he learned the way the education system works in Thailand.

"You must work from the top down to have effective change in Thailand, and that means working in and through the system, the bureaucracy. Being a nice guy is not enough to change things. People love you but you often can't get anything done. Any significant change comes from the top, where the power is. It's the structure here."

His second year, he had a chance to become an elementary school English supervisor and he took the opportunity. It held out the possibility of a more powerful role in changing and improving the system of teaching English in Thailand.

"It was an educational year. It took me time to know what was going on and how things operated. The chain of command. How to push, how to present your ideas and suggestions. It takes time. Time to know whom to see, how to approach him with an idea."

In his third year, Harvey moved to Bangkok to work at the secondary school supervisory unit—the heart of the bureaucracy (and the center of power and change). He joined a Peace Corps-Thai team developing new language materials for use in training teachers and students all over Thailand.

"In Thailand, you're just ready to begin to be really effective in your third year. At least that's the way I feel. The third year is the year that justifies the first two. The language is tough. The technical skills take time to develop. Thailand absorbs 'volunteers' easily. There are all sorts of nice young 'farangs' (foreigners) running around the country, but the Thais don't take them too seriously. They know the Volunteers will be going back to the big PX-in-the-sky after a year or two without doing any real damage. But when you extend, and they find out that you've worked here and here and here—then they take you seriously. Because you've taken them seriously."

—by Mike Schmuecker,
VOLUNTEER *correspondent*

WHY I'M LEAVING

When she determined to be herself, Christine Jacobson left Iran.

'I'm tired of role-playing'

Arak happens up close.

Living in Arak too often meant throwing up defenses every time I stepped into the street. I hated my fear and, eventually, the social system that promoted it. It meant listening, not so much to what people said as to how they said it—reading faces, studying gestures, wrenching a meaning out of nothing. It meant knowing my friends and enemies—fast. It meant caring, more than I was used to, for those who accepted me.

Being a foreigner in Arak meant walking through the main square when all the afternoon busses were loading and fighting an impulse to scream: "I can live other kinds of lives!" It meant never letting my attention wander, being totally in every situation since encounters were too often games of one-up-manship. It meant trying to be an Iranian and finding, though the skin was not unlike my own, it didn't fit.

I liked looking at my students' eyes. They were alive but too often showed me that the emotional range inside was as limited as their eagerness to grow. My reception in front of classes alternated between disdain and adulation. Most of the girls couldn't remain indifferent to my presence; they were so busy reacting to me, I could barely teach English, much less encourage them to discover themselves.

My being a foreigner gave us all a learning situation, since accommodation was called for on both sides. We grew used to each other, slowly, and I kept searching for one or two girls who had the potential to get *me* out of the way occasionally, who might be interested in learning how to use me. I saw myself as an underdeveloped resource my students and the local Office of Education could tap and exploit as they chose; and for our experiences together to contain any seeds of change, I felt the impetus had to come from them.

In each of 17 different classes I saw every week, a few girls wanted to learn English and I was glad to teach them as much as I could. But as time passed, none of my students moved beyond reacting to me; and teaching—given the overcrowding that taxes Iranian education—grew less and less satisfying.

I purposely avoided most other Volunteers in Iran, not because I necessarily preferred the company of Iranians, but because I feared that falling back into familiar patterns would compromise the "purity" of my experience. It seemed terribly important to make my own way through the maze, to find myself in relation to Iranians rather than Americans.

When spring vacation arrived, I left Arak—in some ways, for the first time. I was tired of performing and needed to talk about my reality with other Volunteers. As we talked I realized that, like every Peace Corps Volunteer, I had brought myself overseas—the self that prizes individual encounters. What made living bearable in the past was what made living bearable in Arak: a few people who cared whether I lived or died and about whom I cared . . . and the look on a student's face when she suddenly discovered the English in her head didn't belong to me . . . a rainy afternoon picnic with a fellow teacher . . . a conversation with my co-Volunteer . . . being able to congratulate a shopkeeper on his pilgrimage to Mecca—correctly.

The boundaries I had imposed were too arbitrary, perhaps because I had come to Iran in search of something different. In one way or another, Arak resembled every place I'd ever lived. I felt the snobbery and prejudice of a Chicago suburb, the smalltown provincialism and moral self-righteousness of Minnesota, the easy hospitality of California, the noise and squalor of New York.

After I returned from spring holiday—as my students were asking for the 900th time: "How long will you be in Iran?"—I heard myself saying: "I can go tomorrow, if I choose." It was a possibility I'd never seriously considered, but once I had, I knew I was leaving. Occasionally, I think people in Arak knew all along what would happen, that many had tried, gently and otherwise, to tell me that being miserable was an unwise choice —both for myself and for them.

I think of the lie I tried to live, and remember what an Iranian friend in Tehran had counseled. "You have to be yourself," he said. Were I younger, perhaps the compromises a Muslim society demands of an unmarried woman would have seemed less destructive. Had I been more firmly committed to my role as an "agent of change," perhaps I would have plunged ahead to make waves. But I couldn't overcome the feeling of irrelevancy—my irrelevancy to the situation I was in, and the irrelevancy of that situation to me.

—Christine Jacobson

WHY I'M STAYING

'This is where I'm needed'

Gene Flinn, left, stayed in Panama where he enjoyed picking his own hours, his own kind of work and his own method of training people.

This is my second letter. I had to tear up the first one as it was just too enthusiastic and on reading it I felt a bit foolish. It is really enough to say that I am almost through my third term in the Peace Corps in Panama and have asked for a fourth.

I am 58 years of age. Have done many kinds of work to make a living and so am a jackleg mechanic, welder, miner, laborer, etc. In the village where I have worked I have taught the crudest kind of motor repair, given classes in a kind of English, demonstrated a lot of the farming techniques I learned in training, shown people how to build better canoes and a few other things.

Being top man in town is pretty heady to a guy that is only a social security number in his own country. Me, I like that; and I also like not having a boss and picking my own hours and my own kind of work and my own method of training people.

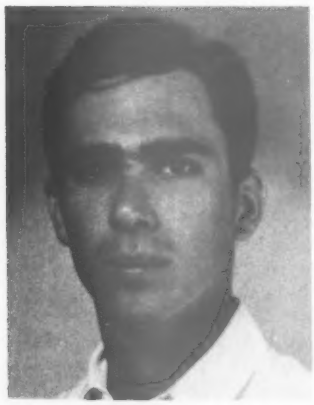
I have a mutual affection with these people which I haven't found in my own country. Some are like brothers and some of the little ones are just like grandchildren.

I feel that we older people are needed even more than the young ones, as Latins have a great respect for older people and don't feel that we are useless as do so many young Americans.

To sum up, I wish I knew the proper words to describe what a great thing Peace Corps has been to me, a person who thought he had gone out of circulation.

—Gene Flinn

'Palm wine and simple conversation'



Extending in Ghana, Tom Graviss' teaching situation improved when students dropped the "shining knight" image they held of him.

During my third year in Ghana there has been an appreciable wane of enthusiasm between the students and myself. For one thing, the "shining knight in white armor" image has been dropped, and we both accept each other on more realistic terms.

I feel that I still command their respect, but the type of respect has changed. After my refusal to campaign for some of their grievances which I thought were unfounded, they gradually came to realize that I was not going to be their leader in student movements. Instead, they came to respect me as an individual and not as some crusading maverick. This is preferable to when I was regarded as an infallible source of power, knowledge and wealth.

Also, in the beginning it was almost impossible to get students to discuss or challenge anything that I said; whereas, during the third year they have been more willing to ask questions and challenge some points of the lessons.

This third year I have made more contacts with people in town. I feel more at ease to drink palm wine with them and accept simple, basic conversations which would probably have bored me my first two years in Ghana. But although I have made these acquaintances, I don't think they are very close ties, because of our basically different interests, tastes and ideas. The thing that is important is that we have both come to accept each other on the other's terms.

—Tom Graviss

•Bolivia

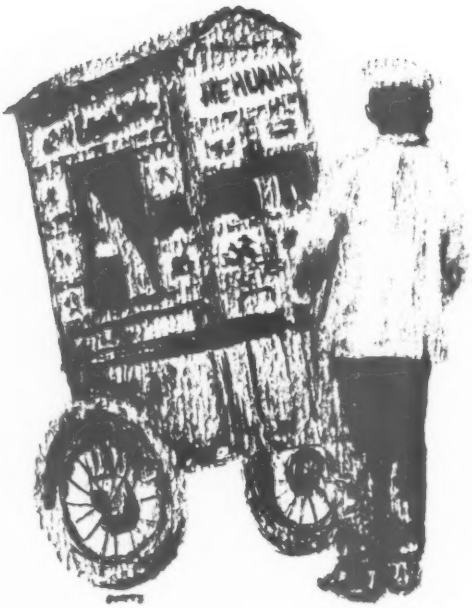
These sketched impressions of Bolivia, done in pencil and ink, are the work of Patricia Modugno, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer there. Patricia studied at the Philadelphia College of Art, has had exhibits in several art shows on the East Coast and currently is doing graphics and visual aid work for the Arizona State School for the Deaf and Blind in Tucson. Shown actual size, these sketches were made when she was a Volunteer secretary in La Paz in 1967 and are representative of a larger exhibit on display at Peace Corps headquarters. Any Volunteer—present or former—who wishes to have art work or photographs displayed in the Washington office should contact Cathy Wallace, Rm. 913, Peace Corps, Washington, D.C. 20525.

Cruzando el Lago Titicaca en balsa de totora

Dos indiecitas bolivianas

Indiecito con su hermana en el mercado

Cholita boliviana y su guagua



Heladero vendiendo en la calle

Paseo en camion

Muchacho
y su llama

'If I ran the zoo...'

Often the letters written to this magazine (and the articles, too) are attempts in few words or many to say how the Peace Corps should be run. In connection with the agency's much-heralded "new directions," a questionnaire recently was mailed to former Volunteers asking their opinion of planned new thrusts in recruiting, changes in Volunteer service, and increased emphasis on measureable goals. Winding up the survey packet was this open-ended question: "If you were director of the Peace Corps, which ways would you change it?"

As a side sample, several hundred questionnaires were distributed in five countries to Volunteers about to complete their service. Analyzing these overseas responses as a whole, one staff member noted four main concerns:

"Their overall concern," he noted, "like that of returned Volunteers in the U. S., was that each Volunteer, regardless of job or background, have the language facility, professional qualifications and cultural sensitivity to contribute effectively to his site and country.

"These thoughts were often expressed in strong anti-authoritarian, anti-Washington terms. But it is important to note that they are in fact similar to thoughts expressed on occasion by Director Joe Blatchford and others in the agency."

The quotes here (with the Volunteers identified by country and program) are selected overseas responses to the final question: "If you were the director of the Peace Corps. . . ."

¶ That all Peace Corps programs be planned, administered and evaluated on a country-by-country basis;

¶ That the site, nature and necessary qualifications for each job in each country program be carefully determined *before* recruiting and training of Volunteers are begun;

¶ That Peace Corps staff—particularly the "overseas bureaucracy"—be decentralized, heavily pruned and better trained;

¶ And that Volunteers be given greater responsibility for their work and conduct overseas, with staff filling a supportive rather than supervisory role.

The Peace Corps as an organization should be de-emphasized in the host country, thus allowing the Volunteer to become a more integrated part of the community. Volunteers should be left on their own to work with host nationals. In the long run the Volunteer would achieve the goals of the Peace Corps. The host country will see the Volunteer as an American who has come to live with them and help them.

—Western Samoa, health

Stop recruiting Volunteers for whom no jobs exist. A complete job description for each Volunteer, including host national supervisor, should be a requisite for program approval—this includes local site surveys.

Make clear that Peace Corps should help solve problems of poverty, directly or indirectly. Technical aid oriented toward the "haves" only intensifies present problems.

Stop making so much noise about change when only the form of things is being changed.

—Peru, rural community development

I think that Peace Corps should always be built on the sensitive Volunteer who knows his community and is willing to develop it at its own best speed. This cannot be spectacular for the sole benefit of Congress.

So many times the technical skill is not the most important immediate concern--the attitude of the people is more important. When a person is technically skilled, he usually is hot to "do" something with that skill which could easily be wrong in the long run. I think generalists (I am one) are usually more willing to accept this slow, grinding type of development than is a specialist.

—Tonga, education

I would make an especially great effort to get more types of Americans into the Peace Corps. I don't like the idea of a fraternity for white, middle-class college graduates. If it is necessary to make a small sacrifice in language skills to accomplish this, I would be willing to do so.

—Fiji, education

If the objective of Peace Corps is to help other nations, let's get more specialists and technical people out into the field--and let's pay them more.

If the objective of the Peace Corps is to mature American college kids, let's send more B.A. generalists on the two-year, post-graduate camping trip known as Peace Corps.

—Western Samoa, education

Do something. Don't try to appease the Administration. Make the Peace Corps completely domestic for awhile. Put a moratorium on overseas involvement until Peace Corps proved itself in eradicating the injustice in Indian reservations, black ghettos or Spanish-American enclaves. If we can show foreigners that we have successfully eradicated the disgust of our own downtrodden, then we might be able to face them (the host nationals) honestly and say, "Well, we've done it in our own country; let us try and help you in yours." Otherwise, it's a joke.

Also, if I were director I'd cut my salary to compare with that of California's grape pickers, as a token manifestation of good will—and perhaps to get the message across to the White House that not all Americans are preoccupied with gelt. Nobody in Peace Corps should get more than a living allowance. Fat salaries breed fat souls.

—Kenya, rural community development

—From *If I Ran the Zoo*, by Dr. Seuss, © 1950, Random House. Used with permission of the publisher.

"If I ran the zoo,"
Said young Gerald McGrew,
"I'd make a few changes.
That's just what I'd do."

Why change just to show there is someone else in charge? How can a person know what to change after a short time and without knowing what's going on? I have not forgotten that Blatchford worked hard and achieved something in South America. But...my question is: Is he out to really improve Peace Corps or just grab headlines and then move off to some other job which will be more important and pay better?

—Fiji, education

If I were a new director, I would raise the readjustment allowance in scale with experience and skill of a Volunteer. I would carefully put a few technically skilled people in the field as "helpers and consultants" to the "real Volunteers."
I would be sure that Volunteers have all kinds of written technical material at their disposal. This is a nearly forgotten area in my country. We need a good library! B.A. generalists may not know much, but we know how to look things up . . . Please spend some money equiping and maintaining a library. If this means getting a librarian for each country, do it.

—Kenya, education

Put more nationals in staff positions since many American staff members are unable to relate to the host country people.
Competent nationals in staff positions are much more likely to have an interest in the development of their country. Plus they know their country, they speak the language, relate, and understand their compatriots.

—Peru, cooperatives

I would do the thing Mr. Blatchford is doing to increase the personal responsibilities of the Volunteer--e.g., getting allowances in lump sums. My only complaint has been that we were treated like undergraduates (not allowed to handle money, etc.). This was an affront to me.

—Peru, health

Don't give staff so many rules.
Readjust the readjustment allowance to fit the rising cost of living.
Stop soft-selling Peace Corps to Americans.

—Tonga, education

Play down the organization--stress the individual.
It might be even better to change the name to Volunteers from Abroad or something.

—Western Samoa, education

I'd make sure each staff member had language training, area studies at least partially developed and taught by his Volunteers, and lived on the Volunteer level for two or three months doing a Volunteer job.
I'd cut the overseas staff by one-third to one-half. I'd likely close down the whole show before administrators choke it to death.
If it lives, however, I would try to treat Volunteers as peers rather than as child employees. They have volunteered, after all.

—Western Samoa, education

Get rid of image makers in the Peace Corps bureaucracy.

—Western Samoa, agriculture

I would keep the same basic idea as today (not make a little AID program), but I would make it a three-year commitment, hopefully recognized as national service. The first two years would be spent abroad and the third year working in similar situations domestically. This would guarantee that the Volunteers would get involved on the home front, which would improve conditions at home and also help attract Volunteers into careers in social action where they might not have gone on their own due to ingrained social inhibition.

—Fiji, agriculture

We must not sacrifice small attitude changes (possible through a "poor" Volunteer living and working on the same level with the people) for a technical monument built on sand.

—Tonga, education

Allow Volunteers to drive and/or own their own vehicles. Why perpetrate this poverty farce any longer? With a vehicle the Volunteer could get around easier, thus getting more done. He'd also have more status and someone might listen to him for a change.

—Western Samoa, education

It is essential to look from the outside in and feel your way slowly. Send up trial balloons and feelers. Be flexible--keep smiling at all times and keep a head.

—Kenya, education

Second dawn in Ghana

By LAWRENCE GROBEL

OCTOBER 1, 1969, was a day of historical importance not just for Ghana but for the entire continent of Africa. Three years after Kwame Nkrumah was deposed by an army coup, civilian rule was restored as the National Liberation Council (N.L.C.), under Brig. Gen. A. A. Afrifa, handed over power to the newly-elected government of Prime Minister K. A. Busia.

The first European colony in sub-Sahara Africa to be given independence after World War II, Ghana has had a turbulent history in her short dozen years of statehood. Led by the dynamic Nkrumah, the West African nation quickly became a continental focus for African progress and liberation. Ghana's initial success helped inspire and fan the drive for freedom and independence throughout the European colonial holdings—in East Africa "Uhuru!" was the cry. Africa—thrust into the whirlpool of the modern world —was on the move.

In Ghana, new roads were built; cities sprang up from villages. Money was spent, monuments built. More than $20 million was spent by Nkrumah in one year alone to construct a statehouse, hoping to lure the new nations of Africa into choosing Ghana as the seat of the Organization for African Unity.

Feeling secure in his power, Nkrumah flew to China in 1966 for a visit. By the time he landed in Peking, he no longer was head of state. The army had seized control to end what it saw as a totalitarian and corrupt regime. A restoration of civilian rule was promised by the military N.L.C., but who was to believe them? Up until this past year, country after country in Africa had suffered a *coup d'etat,* and none had returned to civilian administration with the exception of Sierra Leone and Dahomey.

Now, with hope and pride, Ghana once more marks the way; and once more Africa and the world watch anxiously.

It is a beautiful morning as I sit in the bleachers of this immense square watching the stands fill up with the color of national attire.

It is Wednesday and all Ghana is on holiday. The people are happy. They come to witness the public pomp of their country's new republic. Most of the women and some of the men are wearing the bright-hued cloth, wrapped around the body and over the left shoulder, which distinguishes Ghana from her French influenced and untraditional neighbors. The smattering of color dots these grandstands in pointillistic impression, a shimmering divisionistic canvas.

But when the soldiers and police arrive, with their brilliant blues, glaring reds and shining whites, the scene changes. The pastel blue sky and the fluffy white cotton clouds, the soothing background of blue ocean, the black beaming star in the center of the huge arch which stands like a parabolic pillar for the speaker's platform, the massive square itself like a lake of concrete, the color blocks of uniformed men, the spots of color in the bleachers, the hundreds of green-yellow-red Ghanaian flags moving gracefully from atop the grandstands —all blend into the vivid liveliness of a painting by Gauguin.

The horses come first, then the military, then the police as the parade of arms marches into the square. The symbolism is obvious: the military, in control for the last three years, has come now to ceremonially fire their guns and relinquish their power. The police band plays in the center of the square as the soldiers get into formation and the crowd settles down.

Below I see the striped awning of a village chief's umbrella. One of many chiefs who have come today, he is wearing a gold crown and carefully woven *kente* cloth. In front of him walks his "linguist," brandishing the symboled staff; behind him is an aide, carrying the umbrella. If [illegible] were a village function, the chief would not be walking; he would be carried in his *palanquin,* supported by eight strong shoulders. In striking contrast, the police-escorted Mercedes and Rolls-Royces enter the square, delivering the heads of state, ambassadors and dignitaries from all over Africa.

Meanwhile, women sell ground nuts and peeled oranges, hard boiled eggs and fresh cakes, candy and cigarettes from large round dishes which they carry on their heads. Using my pad as a sun visor, I squint down at the square, looking for recognizable faces as I would do at a sporting event.

There is an awed silence as the people search for their new prime minister's car. Next to me an Ashanti woman wearing a Progress Party T-shirt under her white dashika jumps up and shouts "Hellooooo Tubman" as the front car stops and someone, impossible to identify from where I sit, steps out. She then spots the glint of a motorcyle escort and starts yelling "Busia, Busia, O . . . O . . . Busia . . . O!"

The crowd picks it up as Prime Minister Busia's Mercedes enters. He nods at us, then waves, seeming so[illegible] what embarrassed by all the fuss. The

crowd quiets down as the rest of the cars pull up to the magnificent arch. The surprising quiet adds dignity and [illegible]nality not just to the ceremony but to the people in attendance and, by extension, to the people of Ghana. It is a moment to be proud, and I feel that certain shiver up my spine which makes me glad to be here, to be a part of Ghana's history, to be able to one day say "Yes, I know Ghana; I lived there for two years."

The sun bears down strongly on the square and I think of yesterday's rain. How like Ghana! The sky itself poured libations for the inaugural of the country's second republic. The soldiers at attention appear unbothered by the sun. Someone barks an order, the soldiers present arms, the crowd cheers in approval. Every time they make a move the people now clap and cheer as if this really were a sports event. I can't help but smile—in my country the only people who would cheer a military parade are parents of military academy graduates and American Legionnaires.

The band strikes up the national anthem and we all stand. Thousands of people standing in honor of a nation's second attempt at democracy. It is a moment for poets.

The Presidential Commission, composed of the three top members of the N.L.C. (which in another 10 minutes will no longer exist, although these three men will stay on as a civilian commission) inspects the attentioned soldiers. They are standing in a jeep, riding past the five long rows of uniformed men. In the middle and somewhat taller than the other two stands Brig. Gen. Afrifa, the youngest and perhaps most popular of Ghanaian leaders. As they ride by in this open jeep, I can't help but think of the only young leader of my country who inspired patriotic feelings and made me think of what I could do for my country. Guns in Ghana are illegal; not even the police carry them. There is little threat of assassination here. The political check is the *coup d'etat*. In my country—(The insanity of it!)—only one man needs to reach into his pocket, pull out his mail-order pistol, and alter history.

I glance at my watch—8:50 a.m. Afrifa, back on the platform, is now making it official. The N.L.C., he says, "shall cease to exist. We have demonstrated that a tyrannical and corrupt regime can be overthrown by force of arms in order to make way for a democratic, popularly-elected government." He turns to Busia and hands him the scroll of the new 161-page constitution, written by a 350-man commission and completed on Aug. 22 of this year. As the crowd cheers, four jets fly in formation overhead. The blast from the engines and from the firing of the navy's two ships in the ocean behind Black Star Square bring shouts and cheers from the spectators. One can't help but be impressed by the timing.

The band once again strikes up the national anthem; we stand, a prayer is read; the band plays it again and this time those who know the words sing. Prime Minister Busia stands, waiting patiently to speak.

No sooner does he thank the people and welcome his guests when, from the last row out on the square, a cadet faints in full view of all of us who are sitting in the bleachers. The crowd gasps and turns it attention to the four

Marching before the parabolic arches of Accra's Black Star Square, Ghanaian military units are heading for the political sidelines as their commanding officers relinquish power to a civilian government.

attendants who rush and put the man on a stretcher. I watch them carry him away. Busia's words, "dignity and nobility at its best," in praise of the N.L.C., bring me back to the reality of the situation, only to be distracted by the sight of another soldier fainting. This time the crowd is louder. Busia's words are momentarily unheard as another stretcher carries the man away. We are now watching the field, waiting to see which uniform will drop next.

The crowd roars—another from the back row drops from the heat. The din of the crowd increases as still another, and another, and one more, fall to the ground. It has become a sort of game. As they drop, the people cheer. They are used to the heat; they know there's no danger. If only somebody had remembered to shout "At ease!" before the presentation and speech.

But it is too late now and Busia's speech finishes while the soldiers faint faster than stretchers can carry and return. Photographers leave their favored positions and rush onto the square to get pictures of these exhausted soldiers. Three years, I think, were enough; they're tired; it's time for someone else to rule. I stand to see better. Behind me a friendly voice shouts *"Obruni, tenasey"*—white man, sit down. I smile to show I understand, and sit. The people laugh. I feel good.

The soldiers finally close ranks as the band starts playing. They march in front of the speaker's platform, salute the new prime minister, return to formation. They have been given a chance to get their circulations going. No one else faints as the ceremony concludes and the dignitaries return to their cars. This time, though, Busia leaves his wife and rides with Afrifa at the head of the procession in the open jeep. The crowd goes wild as they leave us. Someone nearby beats a drum and people start dancing in the stands. It's an exciting moment. Everyone's in a good mood.

Outside there are circles of drumming and dancing. Women wearing the blue cloth of the Progress Party, with the white rising sun imprinted on a large red circle, dance to the beat of the drums. Some even wear Progress earrings. It's a good symbol, the rising sun. It is still morning in Ghana. The rains never return. The sun is shining.

Correspondent for THE VOLUNTEER, *Lawrence Grobel teaches journalism, literature and creative writing at the Institute of Journalism in Accra.*

7 Peace Corpsmen die in 1969

Six Volunteers and a trainee died in 1969 out of the nearly 10,300 Volunteers and trainees serving in the Peace Corps.

The most recent death was that of Henry Farrar, 23, of Roosevelt, Okla. He and his wife, Phyllis, both trainees in Afghanistan, were injured when a taxi in which they were passengers was involved in a head-on collision. They were evacuated to the U.S. Air Force Hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany, where Henry died Dec. 13. His wife is recovering from multiple fractures. The Farrars, married just less than a year, had previously been Volunteers in India. But they had transferred from that country and had been in Afghanistan since November training for a new program.

Patrick O'Reilly, 25, of Santa Barbara, Calif., in his third year as a community development worker, drowned in El Salvador. O'Reilly and six other Volunteers were swimming together on holiday leave when he became separated from them. High waves and a strong undertow prevented his companions from rescuing him.

Michael Kotzian, 25, of Flint, Mich., also a community development worker, died in Colombia when the bus in which he was riding fell into a ravine. Fourteen other passengers were killed and 41 injured in the accident.

Four other Volunteers died during the year as a result of illness:

Henry Shuler, 64, of Geneva, Fla., working in applied nutrition, died of meningitis in Maharastra, India. His wife, Ledora, also a member of the applied nutrition group, has returned to Peace Corps service since his death.

Jeanette Stafford, 72, of Watertown, N. Y., serving as an English teacher at Sacred Heart College in Lucina City, Philippines, died of cancer in a Washington, D. C. hospital. Mrs. Stafford was the mother of Peace Corps Washington staff member Doug Stafford.

Sandra Smith, 23, of Miami, Fla., who worked as a pre-school teacher in El Alto, Bolivia, died following a brain hemorrhage. Her husband, Fred, was serving as a Volunteer at the vocational school in the same town.

Susan Losikoff, 24, of Silver Spring, Md., died of heart failure due to de-

Neil Armstrong, first man on the moon, was named by President Nixon last month as new chairman of the Peace Corps National Advisory Council, a group of 25 notables who last got together in October, 1968. Armstrong succeeds former Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

Armstrong reportedly told Director Joe Blatchford he did not want a "paper position" and expected "something to do." Blatchford assured him that the council will have an upgraded role—and will meet as soon as changes are approved by the White House.

hydration brought on by a sudden illness. Mrs. Losikoff and her husband, Andrew, were members of a Malaysia [illegible]noculation team.

The seven in 1969 bring the total to 55 Volunteers and five trainee deaths since the Peace Corps started in 1961. From those figures, the Peace Corps Medical Office has noted that incidence of serious illness or death in the Peace Corps has been no greater than that of a comparable age group in the U.S.

Initially the council's function was to lend pomp to the newly-created Peace Corps. Justice William O. Douglas was honorary chairman; Lyndon Johnson was chairman as Vice President and continued on for a while as President.

Special Services officers Jean Lall, at right in photo, and Polly Kidd met Armstrong and fellow Apollo astronaut Mike Collins, center, during the day the astronauts spent visiting the Peace Corps offices. Collins was recently appointed Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs.

School Partnership passes 1,000 mark

Astronaut Neil Armstrong was on hand for ceremonies Nov. 23, as his hometown, St. Mary's, Ohio, joined the Peace Corps School Partnership Program to help build its 1,000th school.

Students at Memorial High School there have raised $1,000, funds which will buy construction materials for a primary schoolhouse in the village of Matrincha, Brazil–240 miles west of Brasilia. Work will be done by the villagers, assisted by Paul Mack, an agriculture Volunteer in the area.

Armstrong went to grade school in St. Mary's, and would have gone to Memorial High School if his family had not moved to nearby Wapakoneta.

Presenting a School Partnership certificate to Susan Noble, former student body president, Armstrong observed that "in the money scale of foreign aid programs, the Peace Corps School Partnership Program is quite small. But because it is characterized by private and youthful action in support of better education for children everywhere, it seems to me to rank quite high in the qualitative scale for foreign aid programs."

In its five-year history, School Partnership has made possible the construction of 426 schools in Latin America; 292 in Africa; 159 in North Africa, the Near East and South Asia; and 123 in East Asia and the Pacific.

Shortly after the 1,000th school mark was reached, a partnership was formed to build a schoolhouse in Bolivia in memory of Sandra Smith, a Peace Corps teacher who died suddenly of a brain hemorrhage last August.

Along with Volunteer Linda Teen, Sandra started a one-room kindergarten in El Alto, a bleak town on the altiplano overlooking La Paz, the capital. Most of the school's 27 students came from families too poor to afford the 15 pesos ($1.24) monthly tuition charged by other barrio schools.

Sandra's death touched both the people of El Alto and Bolivians throughout the country. A columnist for *El Diario*, a La Paz newspaper, wrote: "Your life, though you did not wish it to be, is a slap in the face to all the paper revolutionaries, to those who sing odes to the *campesino* from their comfortable desks and plush homes.

"You truly were working for the liberation of the Indian peasant because you taught him to read and that is where his true redemption will come from. And you did not ask for votes, and you didn't bring arms for them to kill brother Bolivians, and you did not ask them for support for future political campaigns.

"Thank you for what you did in the name of all those who did nothing for our *campesinos*."

A group of El Alto parents decided to memoralize Sandra in a way they thought most fitting–by building a real schoolhouse, replacing present rented quarters. Forming "Comité Pro-Escuela Sandra Smith," they drew up plans for a six-room building with cement walls, galvanized roof and brick floors.

The people of El Alto have promised to do the construction work. Especially eager are boys at El Alto Vocational School, where Sandra's husband, Fred, taught trade skills. El Alto will also raise 30 per cent of the money for materials.

Considerable outside assistance is needed, however. North Junior High School, Bloomfield, N.J., has raised $1,000, enough to help erect the first two classrooms. The remaining four rooms will be constructed as additional money is raised.

Contributions are being received by Gino Baumann, Peace Corps director in Bolivia. These can be sent to him c/o Casilla 670, La Paz.

Letters *to the Volunteer*

Suspicions confirmed

To THE VOLUNTEER:

You printed a letter from a Volunteer in the Marshall Islands (October VOLUNTEER) which sadly confirms some of my suspicions about the purposes of the Peace Corps and its manner of decision making. My sympathy to those Volunteers in Micronesia who feel their efforts are made in the name of U.S. Pacific power and not in the name of humanity. There is a distinction.

A. R. TODD
Former Volunteer
Gainesville, Fla.

Micronesia programs

To THE VOLUNTEER:

Ana Kamman (October VOLUNTEER) has expressed the concerns which have obsessed Micronesia Volunteers since the earliest days of that project. As a former Volunteer who has remained in the Marshalls, I have some thoughts on the matter.

First, one technical correction. Contrary to Mrs. Kamman's assertion, the Micronesians do not have a legal right to have their islands back in 1970 or any other time unless the Congress of the United States says so. No such provision is contained in the Trusteeship Agreement, the U.N. Charter, the various secretarial orders regarding the territory, or anywhere else.

It is only too true, however, that Peace Corps has eliminated, presumably at the behest of the Departments of Interior, State and/or Defense, programs involving business, legal and media Volunteers, although there is a lawyer in the recently sworn in Micronesia VIII. The reasons for these cancellations, moreover, are substantially those she states.

In cancelling these programs, the Peace Corps has made itself into something it was never supposed to be—an instrument, and a direct one at that, of American foreign policy. I firmly believe that the programs ought to be restored, if for no other reason than to prove that the Peace Corps is acting in good faith. Moreover, restoration has been requested by many of the elected senators and representatives of the Congress of Micronesia, the only territory-wide representative organ.

There is an indirect suggestion in her letter that Micronesians are so docile as to either not recognize or not resist the encroachments of the Defense Department. If evidence to the contrary is needed, we need look no further than the Marshalls, where the district legislature, in October, 1968, passed an eight-page resolution (R-71) which, in brief, categorically condemned virtually everything the United States had done up to that time, and concluded by petitioning the U.N. "to review the entire basis for continuation of the United States' presence in Micronesia, with a view to revision or abolition of the Trusteeship Agreement." This resolution was later passed, verbatim, by the Senate of the Congress of Micronesia.

We might also look at the moving petition of the Mid-Corridor refugees of Kwajalein, demanding just compensation for the seizure of their land. There is an equally moving letter which one former Volunteer took upon himself to send the U.N. regarding the condition of the former and future residents of Bikini. Even these three actions are rather small compared to some of the demands that have been voiced within the last few months.

It has long been my opinion that the teaching of English, which is the primary assignment of more than half the Volunteers currently in the Marshalls, is ultimately a constructive means, leading to the ideal end of making Micronesians self-governing. An understanding of English provides Micronesians with access to higher education in all its forms and, of course, along with this education comes, more or less automatically, exposure to the world beyond the islands. That Stateside education has sharpened rather than dulled the sensitivity of Micronesians to their political environment can be readily seen in even the briefest conversation with members and officials of the Congress of Micronesia when committees of that body visit the various districts, and in the increasing activism of Micronesians, even before their graduation from college.

There are, I realize, Volunteers who, even while recognizing some validity in what I have said, cannot abide the slightest association with the structure responsible for the failures of the last 25 years. To these—and evidently Mrs. Kamman is one—it can only be said that, in the end, each of us must do what he believes right, even if that means an early resignation.

DAVID HEATH
Former Volunteer
Ebeye, Marshall Islands

Political entanglement

To THE VOLUNTEER:

After almost a decade of struggling for political non-involvement, Peace Corps has allowed itself to be used. From the Volunteer level up to Washington, Peace Corps has entangled itself politically (by participation in the Vietnam moratoriums).

Is it less wrong to be used by the anti-establishment than by the establishment? Those who would debate this question fail to see the underlying principle which has been weakened by this involvement. Now it appears that Peace Corps is no longer "above politics," and in some parts of the Peace Corps world this should indeed produce unanticipated reactions.

RALPH OTTO
Kuala Trengganu, Malaysia

'Selection' misleading

To THE VOLUNTEER:

At this writing I am training with Tonga V in Molokai, Hawaii. After completing our staging program at San Jose State, comments about the program were exchanged among many of the trainees and staff in Molokai which warrant consideration by future designers of any staging program.

Generally speaking, our staging was well accepted by the participants. It was well organized; we were always well informed. Discussion in small groups about problems encountered by past Volunteers was a good way for us to become aware of our challenge. A four-hour policy orientation session with Bill Hintz (Director of Staging and Orientation) was considered by many the highlight of the entire program.

There were, however, some disappointments. One of the men in our group was sent home following in-

terviews with two psychologists. Some of us felt that no one should ever be sent home from staging. An unnecessary emotional depression might occur if someone, preparing for a two-year period of service, is returned home as fast as he left. If they are needed, is it not possible to have the psychological interviews at home, before reporting to staging? As it stands, a one- or two-hour period of articulation is not a fair way of selection.

Following the interviews at San Jose, the field selection officer (FSO) told us that from then on training was a matter of "self-selection," that we were "90 per cent selected," and that training was not any kind of test.

Inquiring further into assessment here in Hawaii, we discovered that training is not only self-selection, but selection by every member of the staff, including two assessment officers who carry out more "informal" interviews. The FSO was very misleading. Perhaps his choice of terms was misinterpreted by the trainees and he was not aware of this. If so, then a clearer explanation is needed the next time assessment is discussed.

TOM HYDE

Molokai, Hawaii

Liberia remembered

To THE VOLUNTEER:

You finally did it—coverage on Liberia! (November VOLUNTEER).

I spent two and a half wonderful years in Monrovia and Robertsport teaching school. Thanks for causing warm experiences to be remembered.

DENNIS J. QUINN
Former Volunteer

Ipswich, Mass.

Keeping up interest

To THE VOLUNTEER:

My interest in the activities of the Peace Corps and in the progress being made in West Africa continues to increase since my return from Senegal in 1967.

THE VOLUNTEER has kept me up—intellectually and self-committedly—on the growth and development of the people-oriented programs to which I relate so much of my own experience. The magazine has been a vital media of communications to me. Thank you for continuing my subscription to it.

CAROL E. SEELEY
Former Volunteer

Philadelphia, Pa.

TO : The field
FROM : The editors
SUBJECT: Water shortage

DATE: January/February, 1970

If you see them during 1970, they'd like to take a shower. Two longtime, but young, Latin America program officers from the Selection Office—Meg Hemingway (Volunteer in Guinea) and Stacy Rockwood (Volunteer in Turkey)—drove off from here last fall for a 12-month exploration of Latin America. They bought their blue and white Volkswagen bus from Peace Corps ag specialist, Mike Furst, who had it overseas during his staff days in West Africa. Relatives helped them add features which meet all their needs, short of bathing.

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Although by no means an atavistic call for the "outward bound" approach to Peace Corps, there was Joe Blatchford writing in *Boys' Life*, publication of the "be prepared" set. "Stay in scouting," advised the director. "It's one of the best ways to prepare for service in the Peace Corps. And, by the same token, I think the Peace Corps is one of the best ways a man can live the things he learned as a Boy Scout."

□ □ □

Burning desire to volunteer: A Washington staff member assigned to take emergency calls after working hours reports an unusual phone conversation from a recent Sunday evening. A would-be applicant, whose courage did not match his desire, had a few drinks before calling Peace Corps to inquire about how he could go about doing what he wanted to do most—become a Volunteer. Before making the call he shored up his strength by propping himself up in bed by the telephone with cigarettes and liquor at hand. Wanting to be honest in his dealings, he reported all of these preparations to the "duty officer." But as the conversation evolved, he shouted "Holy cow, my underwear is on fire!" The surprised aspirant managed to recover his cigarette, kill the flames, and then hung up to reconsider his decision.

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The Peace Corps in Korea has gone into the record business, reports correspondent Aaron Gurwitz. In conjunction with the Korean TB Association, Volunteers have produced an album called *Kyulhek Omnun Neil* (Tuberculosis-free Tomorrow), featuring 14 songs, both traditional and modern. Profits will go to the Korean TB eradication campaign.

It would be dishonest to pretend that
I went because
I wanted to turn the desert into a garden
or to realize dreams that were
thousands of years old.
I went because it was different, because
I had nothing else to do, because it was a road
that might have an end.
I knew I would not stay forever;
I never thought of tying my future to this newness;
I knew I would take the road back one day,
but perhaps carrying with me a particle
of the night's silence,
or the day's honesty.

from DUST by Yael Dayan

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